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# OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

*Edited by*

**FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.**  
Secretary to the Commission

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## **OPINION 413**

Acceptance of the Restricted Locality for the nominate subspecies of the Ostrich specified by Stresemann (E.) in 1926 and determination of the name applicable to the Syrian Ostrich



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# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

## COMPOSITION AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE RULING GIVEN IN OPINION 413

### A. The Officers of the Commission

*Honorary Life President* : Dr. Karl JORDAN (*British Museum (Natural History), Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts., England*)

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*Vice-President* : Senhor Dr. Afranio do AMARAL (*Sao Paulo, Brazil*) (12th August 1953)

*Secretary* : Mr. Francis HEMMING (*London, England*) (27th July 1948)

### B. The Members of the Commission

(Arranged in order of precedence by reference to date of election or of most recent re-election, as prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology)

Professor H. BOSCHMA (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands*) (1st January 1947)

Senor Dr. Angel CABRERA (*Eva Peron, F.C.N.G.R., Argentina*) (27th July 1948)

Mr. Francis HEMMING (*London, England*) (27th July 1948) (*Secretary*)

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Mr. Norman Denbigh RILEY (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) (9th June 1950)

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Professor Erich Martin HERING (*Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany*) (5th July 1950)

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Professor Harold E. VOKES (*Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.*) (12th August 1953)

Professor Béla HANKÓ (*Mezőgazdasági Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary*) (12th August 1953)

Dr. Norman R. STOLL (*Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.*) (12th August 1953)

Mr. P. C. SYLVESTER-BRADLEY (*Sheffield University, Sheffield, England*) (12th August 1953)

Dr. L. B. HOLTHUIS (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands*) (12th August 1953)

## OPINION 413

### ACCEPTANCE OF THE RESTRICTED LOCALITY FOR THE NOMINATE SUBSPECIES OF THE OSTRICH SPECIFIED BY STRESEMANN (E.) IN 1926 AND DETERMINATION OF THE NAME APPLIC- ABLE TO THE SYRIAN OSTRICH

**RULING.**—(1) The Restricted Locality for the nominate subspecies of *Struthio camelus* Linnaeus, 1758, is hereby ruled to be “Sennar in North Africa”, the locality so specified by Stresemann (E.) in 1926, that specification being a further restriction of the Restricted Locality “North Africa” specified by Lord Rothschild in 1910.

(2) The under-mentioned names are hereby placed on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* with the Name Nos. 726 and 727 respectively :—

- (a) *camelus* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Struthio camelus*, with a note that the Restricted Locality for the taxon so named is that specified in (1) above ;
- (b) *syriacus* Rothschild, 1910, as published in the combination *Struthio camelus syriacus* (type locality, by original designation “Syrian desert”).

#### I.—THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On 21st November 1951, Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen (*London*) submitted the following application to the International Commission for a Ruling as to the Restricted Locality to be accepted for the nominate subspecies of the Ostrich and in

consequence for a Ruling as to the name properly applicable to the Syrian Ostrich :—

**Proposed addition to the “ Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology ” of the trivial name “ syriacus ” Rothschild, 1910, as published in the combination “ *Struthio camelus syriacus* ”, the trivial name of the Syrian Ostrich (Class Aves)**

By R. MEINERTZHAGEN, D.S.O. (*London*)

The object of the present application is to ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to place on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* the trivial name *syriacus* Rothschild, 1910, as published in the combination *Struthio camelus syriacus*, the trivial name of the Syrian Ostrich.

2. The relevant facts in regard to this case are as follows :—

- (1) The Ostrich was named *Struthio camelus* by Linnaeus in 1758 (*Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1 : 587). Linnaeus gave “ Syria, Arabia, Libya and Africa ” as the localities for this bird. In addition, he gave bibliographical references to Aldrovandus, Dodart, Seba, Willughby and Albin. The localities given for the Ostrich by the authorities cited by Linnaeus were : (1) Syria, Sind, Arabia, Libya and Arguin Island, Mauretania (Aldrovandus, through older authors cited) ; (2) Cape of Good Hope (Seba) ; (3) Africa and Arabia (Willughby) ; (4) Deserts of Arabia and Africa (Albin). No locality was specified by Dodart.
- (2) It is clear from the particulars given above that, from the point of view of the particulars given in 1758, the nominal species *Struthio camelus* comprised what are now regarded as several distinct subspecies of the Ostrich.
- (3) In 1910 the late Lord Rothschild (*Bull. brit. ornith Club.* 39 : 83) gave “ North Africa ” as the type locality for nominotypical *Struthio camelus camelus* and published the name *Struthio camelus syriacus* for the Syrian Ostrich, which has accordingly been known by that name for the last thirty-two years.
- (4) Quite recently (1951, *Bull. brit. ornith. Club* 71 : 45—46) Grant and Mackworth-Praed have advanced the view that “ Syria ”, as being the first of the localities cited by Linnaeus must be regarded as the type locality of nominotypical *Struthio camelus*

Linnaeus, 1758 ; they accordingly sink the trivial name *syriacus* Rothschild, 1910, as an objective synonym of nominotypical *camelus* Linnaeus, and, having thus left the North African Ostrich without an available name, give it the name *Struthio camelus rothschildi* "new race". The type locality is given as "Marandet, south Air or Azibine, Niger district, French West Africa". The holotype is an adult male in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History).

3. Captain Grant and Mr. Mackworth-Praed kindly showed me their note before it was published. I then took strong exception to the action proposed, for, in my view, if an author, when naming a new species, cites several localities, subsequent authors are free to select any of those localities as the type locality of the nominotypical subspecies, provided that the original author did not specify a type specimen. Moreover, I consider it the duty of systematists to retain names (such as *syriacus* Rothschild) which have been in use for a generation or more, if this can possibly be done. In this particular case it could not even be urged that the abandonment of the name *syriacus* Rothschild and the renaming of the North African Ostrich was required under a strict application of the *Règles*, for there is no provision in the *Règles* regulating the selection of a type locality from among a series of localities cited in the original description of a species. The action described above is therefore peculiarly unjustified and, if not quashed, will inevitably lead to confusion. At the same time that Grant and Praed's paper was published, I published a short note (*ibid.* 71 : 46), protesting against their action in rejecting the name *syriacus* Rothschild for the Syrian Ostrich. I was very glad to see that in a paper published this year (*Auk.* 69 : 343) the late Dr. James L. Peters supported my protest, writing : Meinertzhagen "objects (and quite rightly) to the action of Grant and Mackworth-Praed in rejecting *S. c. syriacus*".

4. It is a serious weakness in the *Règles* that they contain no provision for regulating the selection of type localities and thus for preventing confusion of the kind described above from arising. It is very much to be hoped that this omission will be repaired by the Copenhagen Congress in 1953 when it resumes the discussions begun in Paris in 1948 for securing greater stability in zoological nomenclature. In the meantime effective action can be taken only by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature and it is for this reason that I am submitting the present application.

5. My general purpose is to secure a ruling in favour of the maintenance of the name *syriacus* Rothschild for the Syrian Ostrich and of the name *camelus* Linnaeus for the North African Ostrich. It would be desirable that the same opportunity should be taken for granting formal recognition of the selection of "Sennar" as the type locality of nominotypical *camelus* made by Stresemann in 1926 (*Orn. Monatsber.* 1926 : 139).



6. The proposal which I accordingly submit to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is that it should :—

place the under-mentioned trivial names on the *Official List of Specific Trivial Names in Zoology* :—

- (i) *syriacus* Rothschild, 1910, as published in the combination *Struthio camelus syriacus*, with type locality “Syrian desert” as designated by Rothschild ;
- (ii) *camelus* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Struthio camelus*, with type locality “Sennar”, as selected by Stresemann in 1926.

## II.—THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

**2. Registration of the present application :** Upon the receipt of a preliminary communication from Colonel Meinertzhagen in regard to the present case, the question of the name properly applicable to the Syrian Ostrich was allotted the Registered Number Z.N.(S.) 633.

**3. Publication of the present application :** The present application was sent to the printer on 4th July 1952 and was published on 15th October of the same year in Triple-Part 1/3 of volume 9 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* (Meinertzhagen, 1952, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 9 : 96—97).

**4. Issue of Public Notices :** In view of the fact that the applications published in Triple-Part 1/3 of volume 9 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* constituted the first move to promote stability in ornithological nomenclature taken by the Commission for many years it was decided to take exceptional measures for bringing these applications before ornithologists in all parts of the world. First, Public Notice was given of applications not involving the use of the Plenary Powers equally with those which did involve the use of those Powers. Second, this Public Notice was not only given in the normal prescribed manner, but in addition was given to fourteen serial publications or institutions specially concerned with ornithology. The names of the serials and institutions in question have been given in the *Opinion*

(*Opinion* 401)<sup>1</sup> relating to the generic name *Colymbus* Linnaeus, the *Opinion* in which the Commission dealt with the first of the series of applications submitted by the Standing Committee on Ornithological Nomenclature.

**5. Comments of a general character :** The issue of the Public Notices specified above elicited thirty-seven comments of a general character relating to the cases of ornithological nomenclature published in Triple-Part 1/3 of volume 9 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*. These comments came from ornithological institutions, groups of ornithologists and individual specialists. Of these comments, the authors of thirty-six gave general support to the applications published in the foregoing Triple-Part. The single remaining comment was from a specialist who was opposed to any use of the Commission's Plenary Powers. The communications so received have been reproduced in the Appendix annexed to *Opinion* 401 (*Colymbus*)<sup>2</sup>, those supporting the applications referred to above being given in Part 1, the single comment in opposition to the above applications being given in Part 2. Only one comment directly relating to the present application was received in the Office of the Commission. This was from a specialist who took the view that the subject-matter of the present application was concerned with systematics and not with nomenclature. The communication so received is reproduced in the immediately following paragraph.

**6. Communication received from Captain C. H. B. Grant (British Museum (Natural History), London) :** On 2nd April 1953, Captain C. H. B. Grant (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) submitted to the Commission the following statement of his views on the present application :—

It would appear that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is in this case raising a taxonomic matter. This is a question of a racial name depending on which type locality is accepted.

The acceptance, or otherwise, of races and the designation of type localities is a matter for the systematic ornithologist.

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<sup>1</sup> *Opinion* 401 has been published as Part 1 of the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> See Footnote 1 above.

**7. Note submitted by the Secretary at the time of the preparation of the Voting Paper to be submitted to the Commission in regard to the present case :** When at the beginning of May 1954, Mr. Hemming, as Secretary, prepared the Voting Paper to be submitted to the Commission in the present case (as regards which see paragraph 8 below), he added the following note (Note 2) drawing attention to the fact that subsequent to the submission of the present application the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, had inserted provisions in the *Règles* defining the nomenclatorial position regarding the restriction of localities for nominal species :—

2. *The position under the “ Règles ”* : At the time when this application was submitted, the *Règles* contained no provisions relating to the restrictions of localities for nominal species, though systematists were in fairly general agreement as to the course to be followed. The legal position was changed by the Copenhagen Congress which inserted provisions based on the principle of priority (*Copenhagen Decisions zool. Nomencl.* : 26). The present application is in harmony with the provisions so adopted.

### III.—THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

**8. Issue of Voting Paper V.P.(54)80 :** On 14th May 1954, a Voting Paper (V.P.(54)80) was issued in which the Members of the Commission were invited to vote either for, or against, “ the proposal relating to the Restricted Locality for the nominal species *Struthio camelus* Linnaeus, 1758, as set out in paragraph 6 at the foot of page 97 of volume 9 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* ” [i.e. in paragraph 6 of the application reproduced in the first paragraph of the present *Opinion*].

**9. The Prescribed Voting Period :** As the foregoing Voting Paper was issued under the Three-Month Rule, the Prescribed Voting Period closed on 14th August 1954.



**10. Particulars of the Voting on Voting Paper V.P.(54)80 :**  
At the close of the Prescribed Voting Period, the state of the voting on Voting Paper V.P.(54)80 was as follows :—

(a) *Affirmative Votes had been given by the following nineteen (19) Commissioners (arranged in the order in which Votes were received) :*

Boschma ; Holthuis ; Lemche ; Dymond ; Hering ;  
Vokes ; Esaki ; Riley ; Bonnet ; Bradley (J.C.) ;  
Hemming ; do Amaral ; Pearson ; Hankó ; Mertens ;  
Sylvester-Bradley ; Cabrera ; Stoll ; Jaczewski ;

(b) *Negative Votes :*

None ;

(c) *Voting Papers not returned :*

None.

**11. Declaration of Result of Vote :** On 17th August 1954, Mr. Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, acting as Returning Officer for the Vote taken on Voting Paper V.P.(54)80, signed a Certificate that the Votes cast were as set out in paragraph 10 above and declaring that the proposal submitted in the foregoing Voting Paper had been duly adopted and that the decision so taken was the decision of the International Commission in the matter aforesaid.

**12. Preparation of the Ruling given in the present “ Opinion ” :**  
On 19th October 1955, Mr. Hemming prepared the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* and at the same time signed a Certificate that the terms of that Ruling were in complete accord with those of the proposal approved by the International Commission in its Vote on Voting Paper V.P.(54)80.

**13. Original References :** The following are the original references for the names placed on the *Official List of Specific*

*Names in Zoology* by the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* :—  
*camelus*, *Struthio*, Linnaeus, 1758, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) **1** : 587  
*syriacus*, *Struthio camelus*, Rothschild, 1910, *Bull. brit. ornith.*  
*Club 39* : 83

**14.** The following are the references for successive restrictions of the locality for the nominate subspecies of *Struthio camelus* Linnaeus, 1758, specified in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion* :—

Restriction to “North Africa” : Rothschild, 1910, *Bull. brit. ornith. Club 39* : 83

Further restriction to “Sennar” : Stresemann (E.), *Orn. Monatsber.* **1926** : 139

**15.** At the time of the submission of the present application the name applicable to the second portion of a binomen was “trivial name”. This was altered to “specific name” by the Fourteenth International Congress of Zoology, Copenhagen, 1953, which at the same time made corresponding changes in the titles of the *Official List* and *Official Index* of names of this category. These changes in terminology have been incorporated in the Ruling given in the present *Opinion*.

**16.** The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Opinion* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

**17.** The present *Opinion* shall be known as *Opinion* Four Hundred and Thirteen (413) of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London, this Nineteenth day of October, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Five.

*Secretary to the International Commission  
on Zoological Nomenclature*

**FRANCIS HEMMING**